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RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 0064  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ PRIORITY 0038  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0045  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000011

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STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: LAGOS GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS: A POLITICAL  
MAELSTROM

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Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Gubernatorial elections in Lagos are shaping up to be a tough fight. Governor Tinubu's AC has been shaken by internal dissent and several key defections due to his attempt to impose his loyal but unpopular chief of staff as the party's gubernatorial candidate. Meanwhile, the PDP has selected Senator Obanikoro, a former close ally of Tinubu, as its candidate. Hovering over the scene is President Obasanjo's desire to capture Lagos, the only predominantly Yoruba state that escaped the 2003 PDP electoral onslaught. Also to keep his status as the Yoruba's most important political figure, he figures he must reduce Tinubu's clout. There is no better way to do this than to win Lagos State. End summary.

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Tinubu And The AC A Bit Rumpled  
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¶2. (C) Six months can be a lifetime in the world of a politician. Much can change within that period. Six months ago, savoring the defeat of President Obasanjo's third term bid, Lagos Governor Tinubu stood atop a crest of popularity. He had been among those who held visibly and firmly against the Obasanjo gambit and had won. Buoyed by this feat, Tinubu set to put his own political house in order for the 2007 elections. Ironically, the very issue he wanted Obasanjo to face -- the selection of a successor -- was the very thing that has most damaged Tinubu in Lagos.

¶3. (C) With Tinubu a two-term governor, his party had to pick a successor. Flush with victory over Obasanjo, Tinubu sought to arrogate himself what would have been better left to the party nomination process. He tried to unilaterally appoint his Chief of Staff as his successor, basically presenting the decision to the rest of the party as a fait accompli. The blowback was more intense than Tinubu anticipated.

¶4. (C) With dozens of his political allies from the AC vying for the party nomination, the best tack for Tinubu would have been to stay above the fray and not dip into the maelstrom by being partial to any contender. The eventual party nominee, even in an open and fair competition, would owe him a certain loyalty due to his role as governor and the prime financial

mover in the AC. However, Tinubu entered the fray by signaling his preference for this Chief of Staff, Babatunde Fashola, to succeed him.

15. (C) This was a bitter pill for the other AC gubernatorial contenders to swallow. Heretofore, Fashola had been an able lawyer and an effective chief of staff, although the all-too-proud owner of a grating personality that often rubbed the wrong side of people. Moreover, the chief of staff had come into the party relatively late and did not have an independent political base upon which to stand. Conversely, the other contenders were veteran AC politicians who have gotten the dirt of local politics under their fingernails and who had braved the ramparts of battle to help Tinubu win two successive elections against tough PDP competition. These wily veterans had not risked their political lives twice only to step aside for someone who never partook in their earlier sacrifices. Although he was Tinubu's man, Fashola was seen as an outsider. To them, he might as well have been from another country. Given Tinubu's strongarm tactics in picking this relative outsider and political lightweight, a significant group within the AC has rebelled. Those rebelling are numerous and serious enough to have caused an embarrassing, eviscerating rupture within the AC in Lagos State. Strident press conferences were held and defections to the archrival PDP and other parties, particularly the DPP, have taken place.

16. (C) Even before the fallout over Fashola an additional complicating factor has been the shift of the Tinubu machine from the AD to the AC. The shift was intended to give its players better inroads into national politics and as a vehicle for Tinubu to perhaps realize his post-2007 national ambitions in tandem with VP Atiku. While this migration might have moved the Tinubu camp more into the mainstream of national political opposition, it has weakened Tinubu and his machine in Lagos. Not all of the AD migrated to the AC with him. Anti-Tinubu elements and die-hard Yoruba political

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chauvinists remain with the AD, thus diluting the AC's cachet in Lagos. Further, a number of voters will be confused, not knowing the real difference between the AC and AD and who exactly is in which party. Many of these voters will stick to the AD out of habit.

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Comment  
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17. (C) Comment: Because of the handling of the gubernatorial nomination the AC is wounded in Lagos, the only state the new party currently controls. Diplomacy will be needed to stop additional injury to the party. If this fracture is not treated with care, the Tinubu-led AC stands a real chance of losing control of Lagos to the PDP.

BROWNE